

"He awakes me! He awakes me!"

Her nerves relaxed like a cable freed from the capstan, the vital spark again animated her eyes, and finding herself face to face with Marat, her hand in his, and still holding the watch—that is to say, the irrefragable proof of her crime—she fell upon the floor of the garret in a deep swoon.

"Does conscience really exist, then?" asked Marat of himself, as he left the room, doubt in his heart and reverie in his eyes.

## CHAPTER CVI.

### THE MAN AND HIS WORKS.

WHILE Marat was employing his time so profitably in philosophizing on conscience and a dual existence, another philosopher in the Rue Platriere was also busy in reconstructing, piece by piece, every part of the preceding evening's adventures, and asking himself if he were or were not a very wicked man. Rousseau, with his elbows leaning upon the table, and his head drooping heavily on his left shoulder, was deep in thought.

His philosophical and political works, "Emilius" and the "Social Contract," were lying open before him.

From time to time, when his reflections required it, he stooped down to turn over the leaves of these books, which he knew by heart.

"Ah! good heavens!" said he, reading a paragraph from "Emilius" upon liberty of conscience, "what incendiary expressions! What philosophy! Just Heaven! was there ever in the world a firebrand like me?"

"What!" added he, clasping his hands above his head, "have I written such violent outbursts against the throne—the altar of society? I can no longer be surprised if some dark and brooding minds have outstripped my sophisms, and have gone astray in the paths which I have strewed for them with all the flowers of rhetoric. I have acted as the disturber of society!"

He rose from his chair, and paced the room in great agitation.

"I have," continued he, "abused those men in power who exercise tyranny over authors. Fool! barbarian that I was! Those people are right—a thousand times right! What am I, if not a man dangerous to the state? My words, written to enlighten the masses—at least, such was the pretext I gave myself—have become a torch which will set the world on fire. I have sown discourses on the inequality of ranks, projects of universal fraternity, plans of education—and now I reap a harvest of passions so ferocious that they would overturn the whole framework of society, of intestine wars capable of depopulating the world, and of manners so barbarous that they would roll back the civilization of ten centuries!—Oh! I am a great criminal!"

He read once more a page of his "Savoyard Vicar."

"Yes, that is it! *Let us unite to form plans for our happiness.*

"I have written it! *Let us give our virtues the force which others give to their vices.* I have written that also."

And Rousseau became still more agitated and unhappy than before.

"Thus, by my fault," said he, "brothers are united to brothers, and one day or other some of these concealed places of meeting will be invaded by the police; the whole nest of these men, who have sworn to eat one another in case of treachery, will be arrested, and one bolder than the others will take my book from his pocket and will say—'What do you complain of? We are disciples of M. Rousseau; we are going through a course of philosophy!' Oh! how Voltaire will laugh at that! There is no fear of that courtier's ever getting into such a wasp's nest!"

The idea that Voltaire would ridicule him put the Genevese philosopher into a violent rage.

"I a conspirator!" muttered he; "I must be in my dotage, certainly! Am I not, in truth, a famous conspirator?"

He was at this point when Therese entered with the breakfast, but he did not

see her. She perceived that he was attentively reading a passage in the "Reveries of a Recluse."

"Very good," said she, placing the hot milk noisily upon the very book; "my peacock is looking at himself in the glass! Monsieur reads his books! M. Rousseau admires himself!"

"Come, Therese," said the philosopher, "patience—leave me; I am in no humor for laughing."

"Oh yes, it is magnificent! is it not?" said she, mockingly. "You are delighted with yourself. What vanity authors have!—and how angry they are to see it in us poor women!—If I only happen to look in my little mirror, monsieur grumbles and calls me a coquette."

She proceeded in this strain, making him the most unhappy man in the world, as if Rousseau had not been richly enough endowed by nature in this respect. He drank his milk without steeping his bread. He reflected.

"Very good," said she; "there you are, thinking again. You are going to write another book full of horrible things."

Rousseau shuddered.

"You dream," continued Therese, "of your ideal women, and you write books which young girls ought not to read, or else profane works which will be burned by the hands of the common executioner."

The martyr shuddered again. Therese had touched him to the quick.

"No," replied he; "I will write nothing more which can cause an evil thought. On the contrary, I wish to write a book which all honest people will read with transports of joy."

"Oh! oh!" said Therese, taking away the cup; "that is impossible; your mind is full of obscene thoughts. Only the other day I heard you read some passage or other, and in it you spoke of women whom you adored. You are a satyr! a magus!"

This word "magus" was one of the most abusive in Therese's vocabulary; it always made Rousseau shudder.

"There, there now!" said he; "my dear woman, you will find that you shall be satisfied. I intend to write that I have

found the means of regenerating the world without causing pain to a single individual by the changes which will be effected. Yes, yes; I will mature this project. No revolutions! Great heavens! my good Therese, no revolutions!"

"Well, we shall see," said the house-keeper.

"Stay! some one rings."

Therese went out and returned almost immediately with a handsome young man, whom she requested to wait in the outer apartment. Then, rejoining Rousseau, who was already taking notes with his pencil:

"Be quick," said she, "and lock all these infamous things fast. There is some one who wishes to see you."

"Who is it?"

"A nobleman of the court."

"Did he not tell you his name?"

"A good idea! as if I would receive a stranger!"

"Tell it me, then."

"M. de Coigny."

"M. de Coigny!" exclaimed Rousseau; "M. de Coigny, gentleman-in-waiting to the dauphin?"

"It must be the same; a charming youth, a most amiable young man."

"I will go, Therese."

Rousseau gave a glance at himself in the mirror, dusted his coat, wiped his slippers, which were only old shoes, trodden down in the heels by long wear, and entered the dining-room, where the gentleman was waiting.

The latter had not sat down. He was looking, with a sort of curiosity, at the dried plants pasted by Rousseau upon paper, and inclosed in frames of black wood. At the noise Rousseau made in entering, he turned, and bowing most courteously:

"Have I the honor," said he "of speaking to M. Rousseau?"

"Yes, sir," replied the philosopher, in a morose voice, not unmingled however with a kind of admiration for the remarkable beauty and unaffected elegance of the person before him.

M. de Coigny was, in fact, one of the handsomest and most accomplished gen-

tllemen in France. It must have been for him, and such as him, that the costume of that period was invented. It displayed to the greatest advantage the symmetry and beauty of his well-turned leg, his broad shoulders and deep chest; it gave a majestic air to his exquisitely-formed head, and added to the ivory whiteness of his aristocratic hands.

His examination satisfied Rousseau, who, like a true artist, admired the beautiful wherever he met with it.

"Sir," said he, "what can I do for you?"

"You have been perhaps informed, sir," replied the young nobleman, "that I am the Count de Coigny. I may add that I come from her royal highness the dauphiness."

Rousseau reddened and bowed. Therese, who was standing in a corner of the dining-room, with her hands in her pockets, gazed with complacent eyes at the handsome messenger of the greatest princess in France.

"Her royal highness wants me—for what purpose?" asked Rousseau. "But take a chair, if you please, sir."

Rousseau sat down, and M. de Coigny drew forward a straw-bottomed chair, and followed his example.

"Monsieur, here is the fact. The other day, when his majesty dined at Trianon, he expressed a good deal of admiration for your music, which is indeed charming. His majesty sang your prettiest airs, and the dauphiness, who is always anxious to please his majesty in every respect, thought that it might give him pleasure to see one of your comic operas performed in the theater at Trianon."

Rousseau bowed low.

"I come, therefore, to ask you, from the dauphiness—"

"Oh, sir," interrupted Rousseau, "my permission has nothing to do in the matter. My pieces, and the airs belonging to them, are the property of the theater where they are represented. The permission must therefore be sought from the comedians, and her royal highness will, I am assured, find no obstacles in that quarter. The actors will be too happy to

play and sing before his majesty and the court."

"That is not precisely what I am commissioned to request, sir," said M. de Coigny. "Her royal highness the dauphiness wishes to give a more complete and more *recherché* entertainment to his majesty. He knows all your operas, sir."

Another bow from Rousseau.

"And sings them charmingly."

Rousseau bit his lips.

"It is too much honor," stammered he.

"Now," pursued M. de Coigny, "as several ladies of the court are excellent musicians, and sing delightfully, and as several gentlemen also have studied music with some success, whichever of your operas the dauphiness may choose shall be performed by this company of ladies and gentlemen, the principal actors being their royal highnesses."

Rousseau bounded in his chair.

"I assure you, sir," said he, "that this is a signal honor conferred upon me, and I beg you will offer my most humble thanks to the dauphiness."

"Oh! that is not all," said M. de Coigny, with a smile.

"Ah!"

"The troupe thus composed is more illustrious, certainly, than that usually employed, but also more inexperienced. The superintendence and the advice of a master are therefore indispensable. The performance ought to be worthy of the august spectator who will occupy the royal box, and also of the illustrious author."

Rousseau rose to bow again. This time the compliment had touched him, and he saluted M. de Coigny most graciously.

"For this purpose, sir," continued the gentleman-in-waiting, "her royal highness requests your company at Trianon, to superintend the general rehearsal of the work."

"Oh," said Rousseau, "her royal highness cannot surely think of such a thing. I at Trianon?"

"Well!" said M. de Coigny, with the most natural air possible.

"Oh! sir, you are a man of taste and judgment, you have more tact than the

majority of men; answer me, on your conscience, is not the idea of Rousseau, the philosopher, the outlaw, the misanthrope, attending at court, enough to make the whole cabal split their sides with laughter?"

"I do not see," replied M. de Coigny, coldly, "how the laughter and the remarks of that foolish set which persecutes you should disturb the repose of a gallant man, and an author who may lay claim to be the first in the kingdom. If you have this weakness, M. Rousseau, conceal it carefully; it alone would be sufficient to raise a laugh at your expense. As to what remarks may be made, you will confess that those making them had better be careful on that point, when the pleasure and the wishes of her royal highness the dauphiness, presumptive heiress of the French kingdom, are in question."

"Certainly," said Rousseau; "certainly."

"Can it be, possibly, a lingering feeling of false shame?" said M. de Coigny, smiling. "Because you have been severe upon kings, do you fear to humanize yourself? Ah! Monsieur Rousseau, you have given valuable lessons to the human race, but I hope you do not hate them. And, besides, you certainly except the ladies of the blood-royal."

"Sir, you are very kind to press me so much; but think of my position—I live retired, alone, unhappy."

Therese made a grimace.

"Unhappy!" said she; "he is hard to please!"

"Whatever effort I may make, there will always be something in my features and manner displeasing to the eyes of the king and the princesses, who seek only joy and happiness. What should I do there—what should I say?"

"One would think you distrusted yourself. But, sir, do you not think that he who has written the '*Nouvelle Heloise*' and the '*Confessions*,' must have more talent for speaking and acting than all of us others put together, no matter what position we occupy?"

"I assure you, sir, it is impossible."

"That word, sir, is not known to princes."

"And for that very reason, sir, I shall remain at home."

"Sir, you would not inflict the dreadful disappointment of returning vanquished and disgraced to Versailles on me, the venturesome messenger who undertook to satisfy her royal highness? It would be such a blow to me, that I should immediately retire into voluntary exile. Come, my dear M. Rousseau, grant to me, a man full of the deepest sympathy for your works, this favor—a favor which you would refuse to supplicating kings."

"Sir, your kindness gains my heart; your eloquence is irresistible; and your voice touches me more than I can express."

"Will you allow yourself to be persuaded?"

"No, I cannot — no, decidedly; my health forbids such a journey."

"A journey! oh, Monsieur Rousseau, what are you thinking of? An hour and a quarter in a carriage!"

"Yes; for you and your prancing horses."

"But all the equipages of the court are at your disposal, M. Rousseau. The dauphiness charged me to tell you that there is an apartment prepared for you at Trianon; for she is unwilling that you should have to return so late to Paris. The dauphin, who knows all your works by heart, said, before the whole court, that he would be proud to show the room in his palace where M. Rousseau had slept."

Therese uttered a cry of admiration, not for Rousseau, but for the good prince.

Rousseau could not withstand this last mark of good-will.

"I must surrender," said he, "for never have I been so well attacked."

"Your heart only is vanquished, sir," replied De Coigny; "your mind is impregnable."

"I shall go, then, sir, in obedience to the wishes of her royal highness."

"Oh! sir, receive my personal thanks. As regards the dauphiness's, permit me to abstain. She would feel annoyed at

being forestalled, as she means to pay them to you in person this evening. Besides, you know, it is the man's part to thank a young and adorable lady who is good enough to make advances to him."

"True, sir," replied Rousseau, smiling; "but old men have the privilege of pretty women—they are sought after."

"If you will name your hour, M. Rousseau, I shall send my carriage for you; or, rather, I will come myself to take you up."

"No, thank you, sir. I must positively refuse your kind offer. I will go to Trianon, but let me go in whatever manner I may choose. From this moment leave me to myself. I shall come, that is all. Tell me the hour."

"What, sir! you will not allow me to introduce you? I know I am not worthy of the honor, and that a name like yours needs no announcement—"

"Sir, I am aware that you are more at court than I am anywhere in the world. I do not refuse your offer, therefore, from any motives personal to yourself; but I love my liberty. I wish to go as if I were merely taking a walk, and—in short, that is my ultimatum."

"Sir, I bow to your decision, and should be most unwilling to displease you in any particular. The rehearsal commences at six o'clock."

"Very well. At a quarter before six I shall be at Trianon."

"But by what conveyance?"

"That is my affair; these are my horses."

He pointed to his legs, which were still well formed, and displayed with some pretension.

"Five leagues!" said M. de Coigny, alarmed, "you will be knocked up—take care, it will be a fatiguing evening!"

"In that case, I have my carriage and my horses also—a fraternal carriage—the popular vehicle—which belongs to my neighbor as well as to myself, and which costs only fifteen sous."

"Oh! good heavens! The stage-coach! You make me shudder."

"Its benches, which seem to you so hard, are to me like the Sybarite's couch.

To me they seem stuffed with down or strewn with rose-leaves. Adieu, sir, till this evening."

M. de Coigny, seeing himself thus dismissed, took his leave after a multitude of thanks, indications more or less precise, and expressions of gratitude for his services. He descended the dark staircase, accompanied by Rousseau to the landing, and by Therese half way down the stairs.

M. de Coigny entered his carriage, which was waiting in the street, and drove back to Versailles, smiling to himself.

Therese returned to the apartment, slamming the door with angry violence, which foretold a storm for Rousseau.

## CHAPTER CVII.

### ROUSSEAU'S TOILET.

WHEN M. de Coigny was gone, Rousseau, whose ideas this visit had entirely changed, threw himself into a little arm-chair, with a deep sigh, and said in a sleepy tone:

"Oh! how tiresome this is! How these people weary me with their persecutions!"

Therese caught the last words as she entered, and placing herself before Rousseau:

"How proud we are!" said she.

"I?" asked Rousseau, surprised.

"Yes; you are a vain fellow—a hypocrite!"

"I?"

"Yes, you! you are enchanted to go to court, and you conceal your joy under this false indifference."

"Oh! good heavens!" replied Rousseau, shrugging his shoulders, and humiliated at being so truly described.

"Do you not wish to make me believe that it is not a great honor for you to perform for the king the airs you thump here upon your spinet, like a good-for-nothing as you are?"

Rousseau looked angrily at his wife.